THE VERNACULAR RESPONSE

COLLECTIVE FORTIFICATION

NAXOS
Kastro, The Capital of an Insular State
The Naxos Kastro is at the center of this helicopter-based photograph. The tiny island of Palatia is on the right side and the island of Paros appears in the background.

NAXOS
Kastro, The Capital of an Insular State

Naxos, at 443 square kilometers, is the largest and among the most fertile of the Cycladic islands. The one-thousand-and-four-meter tip of Mount Zas dominates the Cycladic landscape and seascape. In contrast to the typical small and rocky one-town Aegean island, Naxos has historically supported tens of settlements, thanks to its size and riches of its soil. In fact, size and riches of its soil, as well as its central location in the south Aegean Archipelago, have determined much of the history of the island. That Naxos was important in early times is evident from its role in Greek mythology. Dionysos was said to have been born on the island and an ungrateful Theseus abandoned Ariadne there. In antiquity the island was capable of putting a remarkable eight thousand heavy armed infantry in the field. In the Middle Ages, soon after the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, Naxos attracted the acquisitive attention of Marco Sanudo who recognized strategic and economic potential of the island. Gathering around him a band of equally young and adventurous warriors to whom he had promised rich fiefs in the El Dorado of the Aegean, Sanudo captured seventeen Aegean islands including Naxos, making its main city, also called Naxos, the capital of his duchy. He set out erecting a major fortification in the form of a castle on top of the ancient city, as a rich and immediately available building materials. In addition, after improving the harbor by the construction of a mole, Sanudo built a new fleet, thereby promoting himself to a powerful ruler and causing many other Latin chieftains in the region to seek his attention.

**NAXOS GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Prefecture:** Cyclades
- **Location (Kastro):** 37° 06' 32" N, 25° 22' 53" E
- **Distance from Piraeus:** 190.75 km (103 n.miles)
- **Area:** 443 km²
- **Dimensions:** 33 km long, 24 km wide
- **Shoreline:** 148 km
- **Highest Elevation:** 1004 m (Mount Zas)
- **Permanent Population:** 17,357 (2001)
- **Port:** Naxos (Chora)
The army of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople. Fragmentation of Byzantine territories.

1347

JACOPO II CRISPO

Tenth Duke

1346

GIOVANNI CRISPO

Ninth Duke

1345

NICOLO II CRISPO

Eighth Duke

1344

FRANCESCO II CRISPO

Seventh Duke

1343

JACOPO I CRISPO

Sixth Duke

1342

GIOVANNI I CRISPO

Fifth Duke

1341

FRANCESCO I CRISPO

Fourth Duke

1340

NICOLO I CRISPO-SPEZZABANDA

Third Duke

1339

NICOLO III DALLE CARCERI

Second Duke

1338

GIOVANNI III CRISPO

First Duke

The Black Death, Ships from the Genoese trading colonies in the Crimean peninsula pass through the Aegean Sea and bring the Black Death to Italy.

NAXOS MEDIEVAL CHRONICLE

1284

The army of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople. Fragmentation of Byzantine territories.

1297

FRANCESCO I CRISPO

First Duke

1296

FRANCESCO II CRISPO

Second Duke

1295

FRANCESCO III CRISPO

Third Duke

1294

FRANCESCO IV CRISPO

Fourth Duke

1293

FRANCESCO V CRISPO

Fifth Duke

1292

FRANCESCO VI CRISPO

Sixth Duke

1291

FRANCESCO VII CRISPO

Seventh Duke

1290

FRANCESCO VIII CRISPO

Eighth Duke

1289

FRANCESCO IX CRISPO

Ninth Duke

1288

FRANCESCO X CRISPO

Tenth Duke

1287

FRANCESCO XI CRISPO

Eleventh Duke

1286

FRANCESCO XII CRISPO

Twelfth Duke

1285

FRANCESCO XIII CRISPO

Thirteenth Duke

1284

FRANCESCO XIV CRISPO

Fourteenth Duke

1283

FRANCESCO XV CRISPO

Fifteenth Duke

1282

FRANCESCO XVI CRISPO

Sixteenth Duke

1281

FRANCESCO XVII CRISPO

Seventeenth Duke

1280

FRANCESCO XVIII CRISPO

Eighteenth Duke

1279

FRANCESCO XIX CRISPO

Nineteenth Duke

1278

FRANCESCO XX CRISPO

Twentieth Duke

1277

FRANCESCO XXI CRISPO

Twenty-first Duke

1276

FRANCESCO XXII CRISPO

Twenty-second Duke

With this vigorous beginning, the Sanudo family led the Duchy of the Archipelago for nearly 180 years. During the second half of the fourteenth century, near the end of the Sanudo line, the drama of the second marriage of Fiorenza Sanudo, heiress to the duchy, illuminates the duchy’s relative independence from Venice and the vital and continuous commercial and political interests of the Serenissima Repubblica in the archipelago.

The prospect of the remarriage of Fiorenza, a young widow with a small son who was heir to the duchy, became a source of local friction. Genoa, concerned that she would choose a non-Venetian Latin suitor as her husband, sent a naval commando to Naxos to abduct the duchess and carry her off to the same harem of Constantinople. There, others told her that she would not be permitted to return home to Naxos unless she agreed to marry her cousin, Niccolo Sanudo, whom Venice considered unreliable in promoting its interests. Fortunately, the duchess fell in love with Nicolò, a handsome, jovial nobleman who had accomplished many exploits to which he had been accustomed. Having earned him the nickname “Spezzabanda,” loosely translated as “Host Disperser” or “The Man Who Routeth Armies.” In the event, Spezzabanda made an admirable duke and for Venice all went well in the archipelago for a good number of years.

This sign of ducal life and marriage in Naxos sketches the political maneuvering, intrigues, and diplomacy practiced in running a small state sitting on important commercial sea-lanes in the fourteenth-century Aegean archipelago. The action and resolution occurred within the physical context of a feudal palace of much greater architectural complexity and sophistication than any other Kastro of the duchy.
1. Cylindrical Tower (Glezos or Crispo tower)
2. Northwest Gate (Trapee)
3. Southwest Gate (Paraporti)
4. Prandouna square
5. East side gate
6. Defended Tower
7. Central square
8. Pedestrian traffic path
9. Roman Catholic Cathedral (Ypapanti)
10. Latin Convent and School
11. Archeological Museum (Former French School of Commerce)
12. Capella Casantza (Roman Catholic church)
13. Theoskepasti (Greek Orthodox church)
Naxos Kastro was built on the west coast of the island on a hill commanding the harbor and the strait between Naxos and Paros, another island with great presence in the Duchy of the Archipelago. The modern town of Naxos surrounds the hilltop Kastro, with parts of both built over an ancient acropolis. Visually, the relationship of the Naxos Kastro to the town is reminiscent of a situation on the island of Patmos, where the massive forms of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian hover protectively over the town below. Indeed, the erection of the Patmos monastery predates that of Naxos Kastro by more than a hundred years.

As with all Kastras of the Aegean islands, Naxos Kastro was built for defense, but from the beginning it served in an additional capacity as the capital of a dispersed insular state. To accomplish both purposes, the erection of Naxos Kastro followed principles commonly used for Aegean Kastras but interpreted in this instance by an architectural building program and scale appropriate to the political purposes of Marco Sanudo and, as the time proved, his successors.
Still traceable, the enclosing periphery of the Naxos Kastro sits on a hill thirty meters above sea level. Twelve towers attached to critical points of this periphery formed its medieval defenses. Only one, known as the Glezos or Crispo tower, survives today at a northwest point of the enclosure. This cylindrical tower protected a gate. Still in use and now known as Tranee, this gate was the main entry from the port to the Naxos Kastro. Two more gates without protective towers continue to provide access to the interior of the compound. One located at a southwest point of the enclosing periphery and known as Paraporti near “Plateia Prandouna” retains most of the features characteristic of a medieval gate. Such features are no longer present at the third gate, which is located along the east exposure of the Kastro.
A massive tower of a nearly square plan stands at the very center of Naxos Kastro. Once apparently a stronghold for observation and last resort defense, it survives today in truncated form, its upper part long demolished. The tower appears in Choiseul-Gouffier’s eighteenth-century etching of Naxos and represents another architectural element relatively common in Cycladic Kastra. Similar towers contributing to the defense of other Kastra are known to have existed in Antiparos, Sikinos, and Astypalaia. However, smaller islands with very limited resources, such as Folegandros and Sifnos, apparently could not afford the added expense of a defense tower in their own Kastra.
A labyrinthine network of paths allows for pedestrian traffic within the Kastro. Functioning in favor of medieval defenders by disorienting potential enemies who might have penetrated the external defenses, these narrow and stepped paths continue to defend the scale and character of the settlement against modern-day intruders of the four-wheeled variety, although the battle against aggressive and noisy motorcycles has been lost. As expected in a Kastro housing nobility, coats of arms of resident families are enwalled all along these pedestrian paths.

By contrast to most other Cycladic settlements, Naxos Kastro provides a rare instance where written references to its planned buildings exist. According to these sources, soon after his conquest of the island Marco Sanudo proclaimed that Latins, both nobles and others, could build their own residences inside Naxos Kastro following plans set by a town engineer. As a result, sizable and ambitious residences rather than the typical monochora of other settlements (for example, Kimolos Kastro) contribute to the unique urban fabric of Naxos Kastro. Many churches, monasteries, schools, and institutional buildings, appropriate to the seat of a state government comprise the rest.
The Ursuline convent forms part of the enclosing defense periphery of Naxos Kastro. Below, detail from the convent door.

Naxos Kastro with its peripheral enclosure, gates, and towers, defended the Latin nobility and command of the duchy not only from external enemies but also from the local Greek peasantry who, under oppressive feudal conditions, were cultivating the fertile land of the island for the benefit of their Latin lords. Naxian Orthodox Greeks were allowed to settle in an area north of the Kastro known as Bourgo, but this did not prevent the Roman Catholics of the upper town from looking down contemptuously upon them, first as feudal lords and later on, during the Tourkokratia, as aristocratic landlords.

The Roman Catholic cathedral of Ypapanti. Tradition holds that Marco Sanudo built it during the first half of the thirteenth century.

On the left of this illustration is the building of the Archaeological Museum of Naxos that used to house the French School of Commerce. The enwalled marble plaque confirms Nikos Kazantzakis’s presence in the building as a student in 1896.

On the right is the Capella Casantza, the ducal chapel and part of the eastern perimeter of the Naxos Kastro.
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NAXOS TOWN AND KASTRO
1. Kastro
2. Bourgo
3. Evriaki
4. Palatia
5. Expansion of the 1920’s
6. Major Vehicular Arteries

Attached to Bourgo is a neighborhood northeast of the Kastro known today as Evriaki, meaning “of the Hebrews.” The Jewish presence in Naxos dates to Byzantine times and before. This presence was enhanced during the second half of the sixteenth-century when Joseph Nasi became the Turkish-appointed Duke of the Archipelago, a position that would decline after the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-74. In general there were no Turkish settlements in the Cyclades. Surprisingly, a 1568 firman (that is, an administrative order issued by the Ottoman Turkish Sultan) banned the settlement of Moslem soldiers or civilians on Naxos. Whether this was in any way related to Nasi’s appointment as Duke two years earlier is unclear. In more recent times the town of Naxos experienced two additional periods of enlargement and transformation. The first stemmed from the settlement of Asia Minor refugees at an area south of the Kastro following the disastrous Greco-Turkish War of 1921-22. The second took place after the 1960s when tourism emerged as an important part of the economy of the island, generating additions and improvements to the existing building stock as well as the expansion of the road network around the town and throughout the island.

Although planned in the thirteenth-century, the Naxos Kastro we experience today is also the outcome of building additions and reconstructions occurring continuously through the 250-year-long life of the duchy and the ensuing period of Tourkokratia. Indeed some of the prominent buildings contained in Kastro today went up after the collapse of the duchy and during the Tourkokratia period to serve the needs of the resident Roman Catholic population and eventually to include the Greek Orthodox population. The Ursuline convent and school, established in 1672, lasted for 300 years, providing a superb education to Naxian girls and at the same time underscoring the important presence and the waning power of the Roman Catholic Church in the region. During the first half of the seventeenth-century, the French school in Naxos had the unique distinction of having its charter approved by both a Catholic Pope and an Ottoman Sultan. Nikos Kazantzakis - a Crete, the author of Zorba the Greek, and a giant of modern Greek literature - referred to his education at the French School in Naxos as one of the most important influences in his youth.

Today the Naxos Kastro confirms the versatility of the Aegean collective fortification building system, which, in addition to fulfilling the defense needs of small islands such as Folegandros and Astypalaia, could also be adapted to interpret the more demanding needs of a capital city of a small semi-independent state such as the Duchy of the Archipelago.
Palatia

A colossal marble doorway, nearly eight meters high, including the lintel, has for many centuries been a commanding sight on Palatia, a tiny island connected by a causeway to the modern harbor of Naxos. This impressive architectural remnant, the door to a temple of an archaic Ionic temple, dates from about 530 B.C., forty years prior to the battle of Marathon. Belonging to a temple possibly dedicated to Apollo but never finished, this doorway, also known locally and lovingly as Portara (“Big Door”), provides a persuasive connection between present-day Naxos and its own antiquity. In recent years Portara has become a symbol for the island, appearing on book covers and posters and in other literature about Naxos.

Portara attracted the attention of Thomas Hope when he visited Naxos during his late-eighteenth-century travels in the Aegean islands. Hope included in his collection the extremely informative drawing of Skaros in Santorini, discussed in the Piracy Section of this volume. In Naxos he produced a sepia drawing and a watercolor, both titled “View of the Town through the Gate of the Archaic Temple,” and now belonging to the Hope Collection of drawings kept at the Benaki Museum in Athens. His exceptional abilities of observation and his understanding of the relationships between site and subject are evident in both illustrations.

View of the town of Naxos through Portara, looking southeast

As did most Grand Tourists of his generation, Hope traveled to Greece to enhance his understanding of Greek classical antiquity. During his visit, however, he also encountered contemporary Greece, its people and the vernacular architecture they had produced, for which he had the open-mindedness and sensitivity to observe. To bestow upon his architectural images proper attention he turned to the principles and styles of architecture. Having learned to entertain for none an exclusive predilection, founded on ignorance and prejudice. Each species that has a distinct character of its own, also may display beauties of its own, provided that character be preserved.

This train of thought and vision allowed Hope to record the town of Naxos and its eighteenth-century vernacular architecture framed within the archaic Ionic temple doorway that represented the antiquity he had come to study. By merging in one illustration two architectural genres, the vernacular and the formal, Hope noted their coexistence in a mutually supportive relationship. The importance of this achievement is underscored when the two illustrations on the right are compared to the engraving also on the right of Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, the French scientist and botanist, who had visited the same Naxos site eighty years earlier.

Overwhelmed by the formal architecture of Portara and its message about Greek antiquity, Tournefort neglected to notice and record in his engraving the contemporary vernacular architecture of Naxos just behind the Hope door. In this light Thomas Hope stands out as the earliest observer and recorder, if not the discoverer, of the vernacular architecture of the Aegean island towns.
PAROS
Paroikia Kastro, Naoussa Kastro and an Unexpected Basilica
Within its oval outline, Paros encloses a surface of nearly 197 square kilometers. Among the largest islands of the Cycladic group, it lies immediately west of Naxos, the largest of the Cyclades, from which it is separated by a channel about ten kilometers wide. A single mountain, Profitis Elias, a likely name for the highest point on any Aegean island, dominates the topography of Paros. From this 771-meter-high peak, the land slopes evenly in all directions towards a maritime plain that completely rings Paros. The presence of this extensive plain explains the relative fertility of the island in contrast to most other dry, rocky, and largely barren Cyclades. Both of the island’s main settlements house Kastra from the Duchy of the Archipelago days: the Paroikia Kastro and the Naoussa Kastro, located on the northwest and northeast sides, respectively.

The bay of Naoussa in the north of Paros served as the anchorage and headquarters of the first Russian fleet to enter Mediterranean waters during Catherine the Great’s first war with the Ottoman Turks. The Russians, under Alexei Orlov, incited and supported a revolt in Greece leading and postdating the Duchy of the Archipelago, has marked the island with a permanent historical and architectural importance.

Paroikia Kastro, Naoussa Kastro and an Unexpected Basilica

## GENERAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefecture</th>
<th>Cyclades</th>
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<td>Location (Paroikia Kastro)</td>
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<td>Distance from Piraeus</td>
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<td>Dimensions</td>
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<td>Highest Elevation</td>
<td>771 m (Profitis Elias)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Population</td>
<td>12,514 (2001)</td>
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<td>Port</td>
<td>Paroikia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Paroikia Kastro and the church of Ayios Konstantinos appear on the right side of this helicopter-based photograph. The Panayia Katapoliani basilica is on the upper left.
The Paroikia Kastro is typical of the vernacular collective fortifications of the Duchy of the Archipelago in that it was built as a defensive enclosure out of dwelling units sharing party walls in the manner of Sifnos Kastro, Folegandros Kastro, and others. And yet, for a couple of reasons, the site itself causes the Paroikia Kastro to appear today as a unique example among all other Duchy fortifications. First, the medieval Kastro was built on the same location as an ancient Greek temple, its periphery encompassing the temple’s area. Dedicated to Athena, the temple was dismantled during the thirteenth century, its architectural parts used as building blocks for the construction of the east defensive enclosure wall, the nearby remarkable tower of the medieval Paroikia Kastro, and apparently more that has not survived to our day. The wall and the tower allow the Paroikia Kastro to deviate from the typical vernacular collective fortification and imitate in part a fortification wall system that is completely detached from the urban fabric, like that of Rhodes, for example. The limited resources of the Duchy and its fiefs would not ordinarily permit the erection of such a detached-wall fortification.

Secondly, the Paroikia Kastro we see today is only the eastern half of the original. Four retaining walls and a recently constructed road mark the site of the western half, which has collapsed towards the sea, obviously a result of an undated earthquake, a frequent occurrence in the region. In an exceptional demonstration of architectural continuity the curvature of the wall has been imprinted in the memory of the urban fabric of the post-Duchy and contemporary town of Paroikia, reappearing too in an additional ring of buildings hugging the eastern part of the medieval defense enclosure.
Paroikia and Kastro. This aerial photograph dates from the 1960s. Note the absence of parked cars along the seashore drive.

Paroikia and Kastro. Topped by the dome of Ayios Konstantinos, the four layers of retaining walls support the surviving northeastern half of the medieval Kastro.

Paroikia and Kastro. In addition to identifying the locations of Ayios Konstantinos and the medieval fortification tower, this helicopter-based photograph reveals with clarity the imprint of the medieval fortification enclosure on the urban fabric of the town of Paroikia.
A landmark and an important point of reference in understanding the architectural development of the still-inhabited site is the church of Ayios Konstantinos. The top of its blue-painted dome, observable from any direction, is the highest point on the site. Its foundation walls lie near or on top of the location of the ancient Greek temple. The short distance of both from the medieval tower points to the manageable task of transporting the heavy marble architectural components of the temple from one location to the other. The collapse of the Duchy of the Archipelago in the late sixteenth century, initiated the Tourkokratia period, during which the Sublime Porte tolerated island autonomy. With autonomy came economic revival and opportunities for the reassertion of the Greek Orthodox faith of the islanders. This geopolitical context explains the region’s widespread erection of great numbers of the typical domed small churches, of which Ayios Konstantinos is a graceful example.

Ayios Konstantinos is an architectural assembly of three parts: the fully articulated domed chapel, an attached barrel-vaulted side chapel, and, most distinctively, a three-columned, four-arched portico on its south side. One of the arches is at the end of a stepped and ascending path from a lower point of the site. The unifying Aegean horizon appears in a stunning view west of the portico, while a path leading east follows the curvature of the inner ring of the Paroikia Kastro.

Ayios Konstantinos. The entry doorjamb and lintel decorations, as well as the bell tower embellished with a feline-like head, confirm the apostolic status the Paroikia community has conferred on this small church.

Ayios Konstantinos seen from the seaward side. On the right, looking west from a location south of the Ayios Konstantinos portico. The view from the stylobate of the ancient Greek temple or from the center of the medieval Paroikia Kastro would have been identical.
Paroikia. Architectural parts of the nearby ancient Greek temple were reassembled during the thirteenth century to produce the medieval defense tower of Kastro. The houses overlooking on top of the medieval defense enclosures. The church of Panagia which stands in parts incorporate architectural fragments. The medieval tower in the background, as well as the pedestrian path on the right, also speaks eloquently of the integration of Paroikia Kastro parts into the urban fabric of the contemporary Paroikia town.

Paroikia. Located in the courtyard of the Paros Archaeological Museum, a funerary stele and its inscription give Parian marble both soul and a name.

Geologically, Paros is mostly composed of marble, although other minerals are also present. Parian marble, white, translucent, with supple texture has been historically the main source of fame and wealth to the island. Used in antiquity by Praxiteles, and quarried subterraneously by the light of lychnites (oil lamp), Parian marble was known as lychnites, a term compatible with the translucency of this precious material. Marble, extremely durable under normal atmospheric conditions, was used in Greek antiquity to build the architectural monuments of Paros, parts of which were recycled seventeen hundred years later into the fortifications of the Duchy of the Archipelago, extant in our days. Parts of the same monuments may also have been used for the building of the nearby Antiparos Kastro in the 1440s.

Recycling of building parts has been widely practiced throughout the Mediterranean littoral and indeed throughout the Aegean archipelago. Buildings constructed in antiquity of solid marble blocks, mechanically rather than chemically bonded, became obvious and accessible quarries for later centuries.

With its high quality marble, Paros represents a rare example of the dismemberment of an ancient Greek temple and the reassembly of its parts nearby as fortification walls and a citadel tower during the era of the Duchy of the Archipelago. The remains of a marble temple that once stood on the site of Paroikia Kastro survive today in recognizable form even after their reassembly into a thirteenth-century defense tower. Column drums, segments of the architrave, the stylobate, and the cornice were not difficult to identify, so that, in theory at least, an enthusiastic admirer of Greek antiquity could pull the tower apart and reassemble its parts in their original temple positions.
Except during the late eighteenth century when it enjoyed great geopolitical importance in the region, Naoussa, in population and size, always remained second to Paroikia in Paros.

Protected by a round edifice at the end of a jetty, a snug little rectangular port is adjacent to the present-day town of Naoussa. Little is known about the doughnut-shaped edifice. What look like gun emplacements inside the building date its erection and use as having followed the introduction of artillery warfare in the Aegean during the early 1500s. The jetty provides the fourth side of the port, which is crowded with fishing boats and small catgeries tied to the other three sides. An incredibly small port surface, measuring only forty by sixty meters, determines the “residential” character of the port.

The bay of Naoussa, the town of Naoussa, and in the background the mountains of Naxos. The “cathedral-like” church rising above the town is an example of architectural neoclassical intrusion alien to Aegean vernacular forms, emerging from the capitulatory of the new nineteenth-century Greek state.

The bay of Naoussa. The whitewashed chapel identifies the location of the command post of the Russian fleet present in the island during Catherine the Great’s war with the Ottoman Turks in 1768-74.
Naoussa. Helicopter viewpoint. The "residential scale" character of the port becomes apparent.

Naoussa. The covered passage and the bell tower appearing in both illustrations are located within the area of the medieval Kastro that is also the core of the present-day town of Naoussa.
Attached to the west quay of the port is a small urban area not much larger than the port itself, defined by concentric contours of minimal rise. This is where the core of the initial Naoussa Kastro is located. Narrow labyrinthine streets, blocks of steps leading to upper floors, two-storey densely built dwellings, party walls, covered street passages, and domestic scale churches are all present, confirming the existence of a medieval Kastro.

In addition, the distinguishable overall collective-fortification form of a Kastro emerges convincingly from the air, as the illustrations on these pages confirm. The pedestrian paths and the dwelling units, which ring the central core, were either original parts or later additions. Either way, their presence is consistent with the vernacular tradition of building small, collectively fortified towns in the Aegean islands during the Duchy of the Archipelago days.

Composing an enclosure, the first ring of dwelling units at its east end might have been attached to the high wall on the jetty reaching the round edifice at the entry of the port. It is not apparent, however, how the fortification might have enclosed the other end, if at all.

In his map of Paros, Buondelmonti delineates Naoussa as a fortified town, and in his description he mentions the existence of a sweet water spring within the fortified enclosure, an important asset for survival in times of siege. There are indications that this spring survived until recently, just as in the example of the Antiparos Kastro.

Naoussa, helicopter-based view.

Naoussa port, looking east. Buildings, colors, light and shade, and an opening to the Aegean horizon compose a theme that might have inspired Giorgio de Chirico.

Paros. This photograph of the roadmap plan that rings the island illustrates the fertile terrain of Paros, a rarity for the Cyclades.
To size, antiquity, and restoration make the church of Panayia Katapoliani, on the island of Paros, the most significant early-Christian-era building in the archipelago, comparable in importance to the basilicas of Ayios Dimitrios and the Acheiropoietos (or “not-made-by-hand”) in Thessaloniki. Panayia Katapoliani is not a single building but a complex. Three discrete but attached buildings emerge as its most important components: the chapel of Ayios Nikolaos at the northeast corner; the larger church of Panayia Katapoliani at the center; and the Baptistry on the south side.

The present-day chapel of Ayios Nikolaos, a basilica with dome, was built in 324 A.D., when, according to ecclesiastical tradition, Ayia Eleni (or Saint Helena) set out for Jerusalem in search of the Holy Cross and stopped in Paros along the way to visit the chapel. There she prayed and promised to build a larger church dedicated to the Virgin Mary when she concluded her journey. Her early death meant that the fulfillment of her promise fell to her son, the Emperor Constantine the Great. As a votive offering, the larger church of Panayia Katapoliani is apparently the first long-lasting church in such churches and chapels built in the Aegean archipelago.

Panayia Katapoliani. This 1948 photograph shows how the Aegean vernacular builders contributed to the formation of Katapoliani through additions, maintenance, and repairs, evident here in the bell towers, whitewash, and the shape of the dome. Restoration work in the 1960s sought to recapture the glory of the Justinian church of the sixth century A.D. by clearing away vernacular intrusions of the last few centuries.

Panayia Katapoliani. Attached to a more “recent” part of the Katapoliani complex of buildings, the two bell towers at the upper part of the illustration were not included in the restoration project. The architects retained their vernacular character.
Baptistry, comprising another basilica with a dome, is a rare and evocative building. The cruciform baptismal font for adult baptism indicates that the building dates from before the age of Justinian (527-565 A.D.), when infant baptism was instituted in the Church. The baptismal font also brings human architectural scale to a building filled with abstract symbols.

Early basilicas were roofed with timber trusses whose size determined the width of the nave. But timber roofs were vulnerable to fire and were therefore replaced by barrel vaults and domes in the age of Justinian. The space within the four pillars supporting the dome of Panayia Katapoliani is not the expected square enclosing a circle. Instead, its north-south dimension exceeds that of its east-west by about five feet, rendering the base of the dome elliptical rather than circular.

Neither earthquakes nor poor workmanship created this odd shape: rather, the elliptical form is evidence of the change from the earlier timber-covered Constantinian building, which apparently burned down, to the domed, barrel-vaulted basilica rebuilt during the reign of Justinian. In the process of rebuilding, the unequal widths of the nave and transept were fused into the elliptical base of the dome. Panayia Katapoliani was restored to its Justinian form in the early 1960s.
Dedicated to Ayios Nikolaos, the small church that appears in all three illustrations on the left is typical of the great number of similar churches all over the Aegean islands. This church, however, enjoys an exceptional location, between the port of Paros and Panayia Katapoliani. The photograph of the top is a product of telescopic lenses, highlighting the issues of architectural size and scale, as the dome of Panayia Katapoliani hovers above that of Ayios Nikolaos. The photograph in the middle dates from 1960. The bottom one, taken in 1987, records the great shift in the economy and the character of the island resulting from the development of tourism.

Often called Hekatontapyliani ― “the basilica of one hundred gates” ― to underscore its extraordinary size within the Aegean context, Panayia Katapoliani is clearly an example of formal rather than vernacular building, as is shown by the historical evidence and its architecture. Its inception, plan, and execution were initiated by the imperial capital of Constantinople and inspired by architectural forms popular there.

Over the centuries, the building suffered earthquakes as well as normal wear and tear. In the absence of an imperial Byzantine presence after the fifteenth century, repairs were conducted using local resources, materials, and workmanship. Sizable buttresses, the internal massive reinforcements of walls and columns, the blocking of windows, and the repair of the damage inflicted by the destructive earthquake of 1733 degraded and obscured the building’s original formal architectural character. (It is unclear whether the same earthquake damaged the Paroikia Kastro.) The repair and maintenance work that followed gradually inflated it with the mannerisms and techniques of post-Byzantine Aegean vernacular architecture. The layers of whitewash on the exterior walls, the erection of three typically Cycladic bell towers on the west wall, and other elements of the Aegean vernacular vocabulary dominated the church’s architecture from the eighteenth century on.

This shift in architectural vocabulary makes Panayia Katapoliani another example of the intimate and mutually supportive relationship between formal and vernacular architecture. The intent of the restoration of the Panayia Katapoliani in the early 1960s resembled that of the Acropolis of Athens in the 1830s. Just as the medieval and Tourkokratia buildings were removed to recapture the citadel’s fifth century B.C. glory, the Panayia Katapoliani renovation secured the church against further damage from earthquakes but also removed the vernacular architecture intrusions, structural and otherwise, to recapture the glory of the Justinian church of the sixth century A.D.
The monastery of Ayios Antons sits on the top of Kefalos, a prominent conical hill over one hundred meters tall, located on the east coast of Paros facing Naxos. In addition to the monastery there are ruins of an early sixteenth-century fortification built by the Sommaripa family. This is where Bernardo Sagredo and his wife, Cecilia Venieri, offered their last resistance on Paros to the Ottoman Turks, whom historian William Miller has called a “terrible scourge.”

In 1537 Barbarossa had already devastated and depopulated most Aegean islands includ-

ing Paros. Sagredo’s last stand in Kefalos marks the end of the Duchy of Archipelago suzerainty on Paros. The evacuation of both Paroikia Kastro and Naoussa Kastro and Sagredo’s last defense on Kefalos, illuminates the point that the vernacular collective fortifications of the Aegean were built to defend against piracy or low-level acts of war between feuding local rivals rather than to offer effective resistance to formidable naval forces like those commanded by the Turkish Sultan and Kheireddin Barbarossa.
THE VERNACULAR RESPONSE
COLLECTIVE FORTIFICATION

MYKONOS
Kastro and Panayia Paraportiani
MYKONOS
Kastro and Panayia Paraportiani

Mykonos has been touted by the travel industry as a place to experience a temporary leap back into history because of its proximity to the island of Delos, one of the most famous archaeological sites in Greece. While this line of thought may be persuasive, it would be fair to expand it to place Mykonos in a wider geographic and historical context, balancing the island between the antiquity of Delos and the presence of Tenos, another nearby island. Tenos is the site of a major annual pilgrimage of Greek Orthodox Christianity that on August 15 honors the Virgin Mary. All three islands – Mykonos, Tenos, and Delos – retained their unity as a fief during the 350 years of the Duchy of the Archipelago. Mykonos Kastro, built on the collective fortification principle, became an important part of the defenses of the Duchy and another equally important font of the vernacular architecture of the Aegean islands as exemplified today by the remarkable complex of churches of Panayia Paraportiani.
Indeed, when Marco Sanudo established the Duchy of Archipelago in 1207, he distributed islands among his friends to be held as fiefs of the Duchy. At that time the Ghisi brothers seized Mykonos, Tenos, and Delos, and the islands remained in the family hands until the Ghisi family died out in 1390 and Venice had to take control. As a commercial empire, Venice always avoided the expense of running Aegean islands. Mykonos provides a specific example of this policy, for it is mentioned in the June 16, 1391, record of the Venetian Senate, which announces that during the following December “there will be sold to the highest bidder the islands of Tenos and Mykonos [including Delos]; the price will be payable over ten years.”

Following a short period of misgovernment by Giovanni Querini, lord of Astypalaia, Venice acceded to the wishes of the inhabitants of Tenos and Mykonos and took direct charge, appointing a provveditore, or rector. As the Ottoman Turks became paramount in the region, the survival of the Duchy depended on the goodwill of the Turkish Sultan, a beneficence sustained by payment of tribute. This arrangement lasted until 1537 when, during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, Kheireddin Barbarossa made his savage raids upon the Aegean islands including Mykonos, which from that time on passed under Ottoman Turkish control.

There is no firm evidence as to when Mykonos Kastro was first built. But because of the enterprising presence of the Ghisi brothers, it is reasonable to assume that Mykonos Kastro was built during the early days of the Duchy of the Archipelago.
Located on the west coast of the island, at the center of a shallow, sheltering bay, the medieval Mykonos Kastro sits on a small and hesitant peninsular, surrounded by Chora. Not much has survived from the original Kastro save for two specific parts: the area known as Venetia at the western edge of the peninsula bordering on the sea and a segment of the Panayia Paraportiani complex of churches, one of which was apparently built on the foundation walls of a tower guarding a gate to Kastro.

The first of the two parts, Venetia most likely takes its name from its proximity to the water. The area exhibits the characteristics of an external defense wall of a typical Cycladic Kastro: narrow-fronted, two-story dwelling units, attached to each other along the sides, covered with flat roofs, nearly identical in size and scale to the units comprising Sifnos and Folegandros Kastra. The windows and balconies have lost their solid-wall defense posture, for windows and balconies were opened to meet the needs of occupants during the last century. It is safe to assume that the Venetia row of units contains part of the original medieval Mykonos Kastro, defining, indeed, one of its four sides.
Both Buondelmonti and Tournefort outline convincingly the immediate geographic context of Mykonos Kastro. Today’s maps confirm these outlines with much greater accuracy. Mykonos island, with an eighty-six square kilometer surface, is a mid-sized Cycladic island. No point on the island rises more than 372 meters above sea level, and with perhaps fifty percent of the island surface lying below a one-hundred-meter elevation, Mykonos offers a reasonable amount of land for cultivation. As with most Cycladic islands of Mykonos’s size, its local resources historically provided adequate support for only one town on the island. Then came the recent “discovery” of Mykonos as a Mecca of international tourism, which increased the permanent population of the island, expanded the size of Chora, and added buildings all over the island. The result was the creation of what might be called a second town in Ano Mera.
Mykonos Chora. Most likely erected as a private chapel to fulfill a personal vow, the two-nave, barrel-vaulted 17th-century basilica of Panayia Panachrandou is lucidly depicted in this bird’s eye, axonometric drawing, part of the research work of Professor Soichi Hata of Shibaura Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan. The photograph of the church is of the west façade of the building.


An infinite variety of detail – steps and balconies, doors and windows, color and whitewash – humanizes the urban fabric of the island’s towns and establishes an archipelago-wide architectural vocabulary. This vocabulary provides architectural unity while also allowing for the expression of uniqueness, shown here in the brightly colored handrails of Mykonos. On the lower steps that lead to an upper level dwelling, a door frame mounted between wall and handrail creates a physical, but not visual, separation between the public and private domains. The door’s attachment to the wall allows only one decorative element to project from the free side of the neoclassical pediment. The door’s paneled structure and its round bronze handle suggest urban sophistication. However, an opening door without a landing would give any marshal in the United States apoplexy. For related examples in Kyklades, see page 113.
Panayia Paraportiani contains the other surviving part of Mykonos Kastro. The church is a synthesis of five chapels built in vertical and horizontal attachment over a period longer than one lifetime. No one “designed” the complex; rather, time and circumstances worked together to produce an Acheiropoietos (or “not made by hand”) church, which is also an inspiring building and an edifice that vindicates Le Corbusier’s definition of architecture as “the masterly, correct, and magnificent play of masses brought together in light.”

To the general public the Paraportiani complex stands as perhaps the most familiar and attractive example of Aegean vernacular architecture. It is helpful to think of the complex as having two parts, the western and the eastern. Three single-space, single-nave, monochoro-type chapels have been attached to form the western half and are dedicated to Ayia Anastasia, Ayioi Anargyroi, and Ayios Sozos. Separate barrel vaults cover each of the three chapels, which were apparently built at different times. Since the east end of each of the chapels is attached to the western half of the complex, the apses are absorbed into the wall instead of projecting out. The west entry elevations of the same three chapels employ a familiar Aegean theme. Each wall extends upward and at the same time steps in from both sides to reach a minimal width crowned by a cross at the top. In the middle chapel the receding-steps theme becomes a belfry tower.
The Paraportiani complex

1. Ayia Anastasia
2. Ayioi Anargyroi
3. Ayios Sozos
4. Panayia Paraportiani
5. Ayios Stathis

S

seen from all four sides, the much taller, two-level eastern half produces the main volumes that constitute the familiar image of the complex. Entered from the east side, the lower level is unlit and encloses a small narthex that runs parallel to a similarly sized chapel dedicated to Ayios Stathis. A flat roof of wood beams serves as the floor for the space above.

Essentially space left over from an earlier time, with no known use, the lower level provides a platform for the chapel space above and its crowning jewel, the dome. Taller than either of its horizontal dimensions, the chapel encloses a dimly lit space in the Byzantine tradition of an “inscribed cross with a dome.” It is dedicated to Panayia Panagioti (or the “Virgin Mary by-the-gate”), the name used to identify the complex. In this particular church the barrel vaults under the inscribed cross are reduced to the width of the arches on all four sides. A drum supports the dome, a distinction that is visible from the outside; from inside, however, the drum and the dome merge into a half-sphere.

Uncharacteristically, the main space is entered directly through a door next to the off-center apse, which is screened by a wall and reached by two sets of steps and three turns. This complicated access route apparently resulted from originally unforeseen changes in the life and use of the complex.

The five intact chapels, together with other parts of the Panayia Panagioti complex now virtually in ruins, contribute powerfully to the present three-dimensional and sculptural form of the complex. In the absence of either historical data or a reliable oral tradition, we can only hypothesize that the partially collapsed north-south wall that leads up to the bell tower formed part of an enclosure that related to the church of Panayia Panagioti. And we can only guess that the two-level, roofless rectangular building at the northeastern corner of the complex served domestic use and belonged to a larger set of now-defunct buildings. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Panayia Panagioti complex was a distinctive part of the periphery of the Mykonos Kastro, the walled town of Ayios Anargyros, the middle of the three chapels in the western half of the complex, an exceptionally thick and might once have served as the base of a tower attached to the defense perimeter that guarded a gate to the town. (Building a Greek Orthodox church on the foundations of a defense tower of the Duchy of the Archipelago era is not a rare occurrence. Astypalaia Kastro provides a similar example; Ayios Sozos, the northernmost of the three chapels and a later addition to the complex, probably conceals a fortification gate positioned where the apse of the chapel in now located. If so, it would help to explain the unusual narthex space of Ayios Stathis.)

This narthex could previously have been a gate with heavy doors at both of its narrow ends, an easily recognizable fortification design that resembles that of the gates of Sitia Kastro. The presence of an apse on the spot could help explain the word Panagioti, a combination of para (next to) and poros (the gate) that produces the name of the complex. The “Virgin Mary by-the-gate.”
The dome of Paraportiani, looking west

Paraportiani is a remarkable assembly of solids and voids; of such architectural parts as walls, buttresses, barrel vaults, and a dome; and of spaces in use or abandoned. Time has eroded some parts and fused others. Some of the building material has been removed for other uses, and the actions of the sun, the wind, and the sea have aged the building’s exterior with wrinkle-like marks. But none of these factors and processes has contributed as much to the building’s present form as the annual whitewashing of the complex. Whitewash endlessly applied has created the present monolithic, seamless form, so strikingly revealed by the clear sunlight of the Aegean archipelago.

The dome of Paraportiani, looking north

This illustration of the church of Paraportiani dates from the summer of 1960. Its major interest lies in the juxtaposition of the church with the boat being built in front of it, a coincidence not likely to be repeated. Church and boat stand for different approaches to the art of building, the monolithic and the analytical. The church’s years of wear, collapse, and repair, together with its multiple layers of whitewash, have caused its walls, buttresses, drums, and domes to lose their individual identities and merge into a single monolithic shell. The boat, on the other hand, is the product of an analytical vision within which the keel, the ribs, and the planks retain their identities even when, together, they constitute a completed vessel. The two approaches to building, the monolithic and the analytical, are mutually informing and have produced, respectively, the fortified citadels and the sailing ships that constituted the two pillars of Aegean society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
THE VERNACULAR RESPONSE

COLLECTIVE FORTIFICATION

SYROS

Ano Syros and Ermoupolis
The emergence in the 1830s of a modern Greek state incorporating all the Cycladic islands of the Aegean archipelago, together with the geographically symmetrical French conquest of Algiers, brought to a final end the era of Mediterranean piracy. These two major geopolitical events affected decisively the physical and architectural character of the Aegean Kastro: with piracy a threat of the past, most Aegean settlements expanded beyond their former constricted defense perimeters. Astypalaia Kastro illustrates this point. Released from defense restrictions as well, other settlements relocated themselves to more accessible areas nearby. The disappearance of Skaros Kastro in Santorini over a span of 50 years is an appropriate illustration for this observation.

Ano Syros and Ermoupolis respectively predate and postdate these two major geopolitical events of the 1830s. Providing a uniquely paired example of Aegean settlement development, they form the capital city of the island of Syros. Ano Syros (Upper Syros), the medieval part of the town, is at the left of the port as one arrives, sitting on a pronounced hill topped by the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. George, known locally as San-George-is. On the right side of the harbor and at a lower elevation, Ermoupolis developed following the successful conclusion of the Greek War of Independence. History and site unite and, at the same time, separate these two distinct parts of the urban fabric of the island of Syros.

At eighty-four square kilometers, about the same area as Mykonos, Syros is among the smaller of the Cycladic complex. A rocky island with the most important harbor in the region and a high elevation point of 442 meters, Syros today supports the highest concentration of urban population in the Cyclades, most of which is located in Ermoupolis. Breaking the rule of one settlement per small island, Syros is inundated with tens of small villages, some of which predate Ermoupolis.

**SYROS**

**Ano Syros and Ermoupolis**

The port of Syros looking north. Ano Syros is on the left; in front and on the right of the illustration is Ermoupolis.

Ano Syros, helicopter-based photograph, looking northeast. The Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. George tops the hill of Ano Syros.

**SYROS GENERAL INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefecture</th>
<th>Cyclades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location (Ano Syros)</td>
<td>37° 27' 00&quot; N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Piraeus</td>
<td>201 n.miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>134 km² (51.7 miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>17 km long, 10 km wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Elevation</td>
<td>442 m (1450 ft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Population</td>
<td>18,788 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port</td>
<td>Ermoupolis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Left: I. Svda” (Syros Island). Cristofore Buondelmonti, Liber Insulareum Archipelagi, Gennadius Library, Athens, Greece. The name SYPA on the map was in Latin use during medieval times and could be a misreading of the Greek characters in SYPA.
Above: “View of Ano Syros and the Island of Syros.” Engraving from “Voyage Pittoresque de la Grece,” of Choiseul-Gouffier illustrating economically the mission of the citadel and its relationship to the harbor and the landscape of the island. Snowy-white Ano Syros, looking southeast. Notice the hilltops dropping precipitously on the side away from the port, thus prohibiting building. The port of Syros appears immediately beyond. Ano Syros. The Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. George is at the center of this helicopter-based photograph, above. Notice the dramatic difference in massing and scale between the institutional building on the upper left and the relatively smaller buildings on the lower right. The image is reproduced courtesy of the authors. Ano Syros appears on page 237, and a detail of the St. George bell tower appears on the left. Ano Syros was among the seventeen islands incorporated into the Duchy of the Archipelago by Marco Sanudo following his conquest of Naxos in 1207. Ano Syros, built as the Kastro of the island, remained the only settlement on Syros until the early nineteenth-century. A Choiseul-Gouffier engraving dating from the 1780s illustrates convincingly the mission of the citadel and its relationship to the harbor and the landscape of the island. Ano Syros encompasses all the physical characteristics of a Kastro. However, the hilltop’s double advantage of early enemy observation and defense from high ground contributed the most in determining its memorable and impressive urban and architectural form. Given the excellent visibility prevailing in the Aegean archipelago, any enemy or corsair intent on assaulting Ano Syros would have been likely observed from its heights. Early detection provided precious warning to the islanders and perhaps discouraged would-be attackers. Had enemy bands nonetheless landed, the defenders’ ability to observe their movements from the heights would still have been a major defense advantage. With the attackers expending considerable energy marching uphill, the defenders would have met them, rested, at the top of their defensive walls and behind their secured gates.
Successive rings of dwelling units that share party walls, allowing no gaps between from the natural form of the site, which is conical toward the south and the harbor. The rings of dwelling units underscore the guiding presence of the principles of Cycladic Kastro collective fortification organization in the building of Ano Syros. Found here are the familiar Aegean Kastro vernacular architecture features such as narrow labyrinthine pedestrian paths, high building density, and upper floors arched over streets. A precipitous drop of the hilltop site has prohibited building on the northwest side, not visible from the port.

Remnants of entry gates to the Ano Syros medieval Kastro (as many as eight have been mentioned) are spread along the fortified enclosure indicated on the diagrammatic plan. It might be reasonable to assume that over the centuries the geometry of this enclosure kept adjusting to the needs of the settlement, as well as the topography of the site as it descended towards the sea. Today, more than any other, Pourgos gate retains medieval defense features.

Equally convincing is Kamara gate, which the asphalt road nearly touches, as its architectural features stand ready to prohibit the entry of four-wheeled intruders to its interior pedestrian world. Devoid of architectural features, other gates remain as points of pedestrian and beast-of-burden access to the interior of Kastro. The concentration of four gates along the northwest side of the enclosure could be explained by the existence nearby of a spring of water. Centrally located within the fortified enclosure, “Piatsa” still serves as the public space of Ano Syros.
The thread of piracy that demanded gates closed at sundown. It was the community
warden’s responsibility to ring a bell for the closing of the last gate, the Porta tou
Katagogon, or seashore gate, at nine o’clock in the evening. Later on, as piracy dis-
appeared, the nine o’clock bell ringing was adopted by the churches of Ermoupoli,
custom that continued until the beginning of World War II.

By contrast to other Cycladic Kastra, Ano Syros is physically topped by a complex
of Roman Catholic Church buildings of monastic and administrative use. The massive
volume of the ecclesiastic forms of St. George completes the conical formation
of Roman Catholic Church buildings of monastic and administrative use. The ma-
ifestation of this natural site has been the construction of the 14th century vi-
framed altar of the St. George Church, which is still used today.

The sultan transfers Naxos and a number of other islands including Syros
to Suleyman Bey for an annual rental of 40,000 ducats. In 1469, during Antonio’s
captaincy, Syros is RAIDED by the Turks. However, the island of Syros is not taken and
ultimately retaken. The Restoration of the Duchy for the next six years.

In 1471, Sultan Mohammed II, heir to Suleyman the Magnificent, names as duke Don Joseph Nasi, a Portu-
guese knight. When Suleyman died in 1517, his heir, Selim I, takes over the throne and
sioned the island of Syros. The beginning of the Ottoman rule in Syros.

In 1504, during the reign of Sultan Selim I, the island of Syros is invaded by the Turks. The
Turkish admiral descends upon the Aegean islands. All are taken and enslaved. The
island of Naxos is among those taken.

Two incidents taking place in Syros illuminate the purposes and capabilities of an
Aegean Kastra. During the Duchy of the Archipelago era, islands passed from
one to another, but with the collapse of the Duchy of the Archipelago era, islands
were often sold to a member of the Sanudo family of Venice.

Following the death of his husband, Petronilla Crispo becomes Lady of Syros.

The thread of piracy that demanded gates closed at sundown. It was the community
warden’s responsibility to ring a bell for the closing of the last gate, the Porta tou
Katagogon, or seashore gate, at nine o’clock in the evening. Later on, as piracy dis-
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one to another, but with the collapse of the Duchy of the Archipelago era, islands
were often sold to a member of the Sanudo family of Venice.
Ano Syros. Pedestrian paths. Typical Aegean Kastro vernacular architecture features are present, such as a forty-five-degree corner cut to accommodate beast-of-burden traffic (upper left), rainwater collection systems (lower middle), covered passages and others.

Opposite page: Ano Syros. Steps and ramps lead from Kamara gate to Piatsa.
ANO SYROS, CHURCHES and MONASTERIES

1. Ayios Georgios (St. George Roman Catholic Cathedral known locally as San-George-is)
2. Jesuit Monastery
3. Panayia of the Carmelite Order
4. Panayia of the Theravites
5. Ayios Nikolaos Ton Ftochon (Of the poor)
6. Capuchin Monastery
7. Ayios Ioannis
8. Ayia Triada (Holy Trinity)
9. Sa Bastias (Saint Sebastian)
10. Kioura (Dedicated to Virgin Mary. Kioura is a local version of Kyria: Lady)
11. Kioura tes Plakas (chapel)
12. Ayios Michael Taxiarchis (St. Michael Archangel)

Note: All churches are Roman Catholic except Ayios Nikolaos and Ayia Triada, which are Greek Orthodox.

ANO SYROS, looking southeast. The Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. George (San-George-is) crowns the site.

ANO SYROS. Helicopter-based photograph revealing the architectural and urban structure of Kastro. The precipitous drop of the northwest half of the site is in shade on the left.
Ano Syros. Bell towers of (from left to right): Ayia Triada, Ayios Antonios and Ayios Nikolaos Ton Ftochon. Incorporated into the urban fabric, bell towers become neighborhood landmarks.

Ano Syros. Capuchin Monastery on the left attached to Ayios Ioannis church on the right. A covered pedestrian path separates the two buildings.

Ano Syros. Illustrated on the opposite page is the dome of the Church of Panayia of the Carmelite Order. The important architectural presence of this dome in the urban fabric of Ano Syros is revealed by the helicopter-based photographs on pages 225, 227, and 235. The lantern and the ribs, decorative rather than structural, are the architectural features of the dome by which Roman Catholic churches identify themselves in the region. An example of lanterns on Greek Orthodox churches in Ayios Menas, in Fira, Santorini, see pages 270 and 271. Much less ambitious, the Panayia Carmelite dome echoes that of Florence Cathedral by Brunelleschi built between 1420 and 1436, outlined in the drawing above. Sitting on a neoclassical frieze and pilasters, the dome of the Church of Panayia, acknowledges the architectural ideology of the location, presenting the viewer with a masterful mix of divergent architectural traditions.
In the 1830s, the war-devastated village that was Athens was dominated, physically and spiritually, by the imposing combination of the natural landscape and the man-made buildings of the Acropolis, with their reminders of Periclean glory. Given the ardent pan-European admiration for Greek antiquity and the important roles played by the major powers Britain, France, and Russia in liberating Greece from Ottoman rule, it was virtually inevitable that Athens would become the capital of the reborn state. A parallel devotion to Greek antiquity was also evident in the political and architectural ideologies of the new state, with advocates interested in reclaiming the land’s glorious heritage, which was admired by the powers not only supporting its rebirth but also protecting its fragile, early existence. Following King Otho’s official entry into Athens on December 1, 1834, the city became the administrative and cultural capital of the emerging state, and was planned and built in the spirit of neoclassicism that prevailed across the Western European world of the period.

Public buildings such as the Royal Palace – now the Parliament Building – the Academy, the University, the National Library, and the National Technical University were not the only examples of contemporary neoclassicism. Countless private buildings, ranging from upper-class mansions in the city center to unpretentious houses dispersed throughout, also partook of the neoclassical spirit well into the twentieth century, as did buildings throughout the Aegean archipelago.
The formal culture emanating from the capital of the Muslim Ottoman Empire was always alien to its Greek Christian population. During the long period of Tourkokratia, therefore, the culture and architecture of the Aegean island towns developed independently of the Ottoman capital and, indeed, autochthonously. The emergence of the Greek state, with Athens as its capital, ended this disjunction and served to establish cultural homogeneity along with institutional avenues for disseminating the formal culture of the capital throughout the realm, including the Cycladic islands. Thus, neoclassicism became the architectural language and vocabulary of the buildings, the city halls, and the schools that the new state built to promote the official national culture and its functions in the towns of the archipelago.

Capture of French protection and the island's autonomy under Ottoman Turkish rule kept Syros out of actual Greek revolutionary activity in 1821. Instead, taking advantage of the French protection, Syros offered precious help to the revolutionary cause by becoming a sanctuary for other islanders and residents of coastal towns of Asia Minor fleeing Turkish reprisals against the Greek uprising. Refugees from the massacres of Chios, in 1822, and Psara, in 1824, were the most numerous arrivals, and their business skills, commercial connections, and capital built Ermoupolis (also spelled Hermoupolis), the city of Hermes, protector of commerce.

In contrast with the earlier medieval Ano Syros, Ermoupolis was a planned city built with great ambition as a commercial, manufacturing, and maritime center within the borders of the new state of Greece. Very much in tandem as well as in competition with Athens, it also adopted neoclassicism as its urban and architectural expression, producing public places of civic importance, such as Plateia Miaouli, and buildings of exquisite architecture and civic content, such as the City Hall, the Orthodox Church of Ayios Nikolaos, the Apollo theater (built using the Teatro alla Scala of Milan as a prototype) and a good number of private mansions of note. The City Hall was the work of the Bavarian architect Ernst Ziller who also designed the still extant, downtown Athens mansion of Heinrich Schliemann, the discoverer of Troy.
Built after 1848, the exquisite Ionic columns of Ayios Nikolaos, a Greek Orthodox church, underscore the concerted efforts of the new state and society to identify itself with fifth century Greek antiquity, sidestepping its deeply rooted Byzantine Orthodox church traditions. While demonstrating its devotion to Hermes and antiquity, Ermoupolis during the second half of the nineteenth-century became the manufacturing, shipbuilding, and maritime center through which the Industrial Revolution of Western Europe finally reached Greece, just liberated from backward Ottoman rule. However, the oddity of a commercial and manufacturing center located on a small island without railroad connections and at a distance from better-located competitors began to surface during the first half of the twentieth century, and Syros lost its preeminent position. Much of the culture and architecture of the island, however, made it through recent decades, and, today, a revived shipbuilding industry, together with tourism and administrative activity - Syros is the capital of the Cyclades prefecture - promises a stable future.

Sitting at a comfortable distance from one another, the vernacular and improvised architecture of Ano Syros and the formal and planned architecture of Ermoupolis represent different geopolitical conditions articulated by the extraordinary events of the 1830s, and in an inspiring way they underscore continuity as well as change in the broader Hellenic cultural space.

Syros. Ermoupolis. The Orthodox Church of Ayios Nikolaos, north and west elevations. Note the Ionic columns at the front façade of the Church.

Syros. Ermoupolis. Neoclassic forms are part of the fabric and express the architecture of the city.